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A TREATISE

ON THE

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF

ORIGINAL SIN:

WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY H. A. BOARDMAN,

PASTOR OF THE TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

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PART I.

NATIVE DEPRAVITY.

THE question, *What is the native character and condition of man?* is an important one, for several reasons. In the first place, it is one in which all men have a direct personal concern. In the second place, scriptural views on this subject lie at the foundation of all sound theology. He who misapprehends the disease under which the race labours, will fail of understanding the remedy that has been provided for it. And, in the third place, such formidable attempts have been made in our day to set aside the ancient doctrine of Original Sin, that there seems to be a special propriety in re-examining the grounds upon which it rests.

The doctrine of the standards of the Presbyterian Church in relation to the native character of man, may be learned from the fol-

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lowing quotation from the Larger Catechism: "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions."

The doctrine of the Church of England is thus expressed in her Ninth Article: "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person, born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." The reference to the "Pelagians" in this Article, requires an explanation which may be of advantage in the discussion before

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us. Pelagius was a Briton, who lived in the early part of the fifth century. He published a set of opinions on some of the fundamental points of theology, which alarmed and convulsed the Church, and were, with their author, condemned in numerous councils. His sentiments on the subject immediately under consideration, were substantially adopted by Socinus in the sixteenth century, and are held by the modern Socinians. He maintained that the sin of the first pair injured no one but themselves; that their posterity have not been affected by it; and that all infants are born as free from sin as Adam was before his transgression. "Our first parents, (according to his theory,) who sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, were not distinguished in any essential respect from those who sin in after ages, and our condition is not the worse for their sin; as they were to blame for yielding to a temptation which they might have resisted; so all of us, by a proper attention to cultivating our natural powers, may maintain our innocence amidst the temptations with which we are surrounded; and therefore we fall short of that which it is in our power to do, if we do

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not yield a more perfect obedience to the law of God than Adam yielded."* (See note A.)

A modification of this opinion has appeared in our day among professedly orthodox Christians. According to this view, the posterity of Adam are not born with a depraved nature, nor have infants *any moral character* at all prior to the commencement of moral agency. But, although neither holy nor sinful, up to that period, they are placed, by a divine constitution, in such circumstances as to render it certain that they will sin as soon as they become moral agents. The principle which is mainly relied upon to sustain this theory is, that morality can attach only to acts of the will—that there can be no such thing as a moral disposition, antecedent to the exercise of the moral powers. (See note B.) In accordance with this principle it is maintained that Adam was not created a holy being, but became holy by the first act of his will, in which he chose God as his portion. Nay, it is (in perfect consistency) argued that even the infant Jesus was not holy until he became a moral agent!

* Hill's Lectures in Divinity.

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It will be my object to prove, in opposition to the dogmas of this dangerous philosophy, that our Confession of Faith is correct in asserting that "the same death in sin and corrupted nature," which attached to our first parents, as the fruit of their transgression, are "conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation;" and that their posterity are "defiled and corrupted" from the womb. It is not meant, by this language, that any of the original faculties of the soul are destroyed. Man has all the faculties before regeneration which he has after it. Nor is it meant that depravity is a material substance which is infused into the soul; it is moral, not physical depravity, of which the Confession speaks. But it is meant, that the soul has lost its "original righteousness;" that it is destitute of holiness; and that as the absence of light causes darkness, so the absence of holiness causes mental darkness, and involves all the faculties and affections of the soul in disorder. They cannot, in this state, answer the purpose for which they were created, of loving, serving, and honouring God. The insubordination and confusion which reign

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within, involve a sinful tendency to forsake God—a propensity to do wrong, which manifests itself with the earliest dawn of reason.

This, as I understand it, is the orthodox doctrine of native depravity. They do not hold, (as some have reported,) that there is a *mass of corrupt matter* lodged in the heart, which sends off noxious exhalations like a dead body. But they maintain that the soul has entirely lost the image of God, in which it was originally created; that there is nothing pure or good remaining in it; that, in consequence of the withdrawment of those special, divine influences, which were given to our first parents, the proper balance of the powers is destroyed; they have lost their conformity to the law of God, and the holy dispositions, which were at first implanted in the soul, have given place to *sinful dispositions*, which are the source of all actual transgressions.

With this explanation, I shall proceed to prove the doctrine. Our first appeal must be to the Scriptures. This doctrine is taught in our text; "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The word flesh is used in a variety of senses in the New Testament. Apart from

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its literal meaning, it is frequently used for *men*, as in the phrases, "all flesh," "no flesh," &c. And frequently for human nature, with the accessary ideas of weakness and corruption, or human nature considered as corrupt and sinful. In this sense it is used in the following passages. Rom. vii. 18: "I know that in me, that is, in my *flesh*, dwelleth no good thing." Rom. viii. 5, 8: "They that are after the *flesh* do mind the things of the flesh."—"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Gal. v. 17: "For the *flesh* lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." The context shows that this is substantially its meaning in the close of the sentence under consideration. Our Saviour is speaking to Nicodemus of that which excludes men from the kingdom of heaven: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Why not? Because, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." By the phrase, "that which is born of the flesh," is meant, that which is born of corrupt nature—of man in his depraved state. "Is *flesh*"—that is, is itself corrupt or depraved, like its source.

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The word 'flesh,' in the second clause, denotes the opposite of 'spirit,' in the close of the verse. But the word 'spirit' there clearly means that which is spiritual or holy—that which is born of the Holy Spirit, is spiritual or holy. Of course, the parallel expression means, that which is born of the flesh is *depraved or sinful*, in other words, all men are born in a state of depravity.

This interpretation, which is the only simple and obvious one, not only proves that men are depraved, but traces back their depravity to their birth. That which is produced by the natural birth is contrasted with the product of the spiritual birth. And as holiness is ascribed to the spiritual birth as its source, so depravity is ascribed to the natural birth as its source. Those who reject one part of this interpretation, ought to reject the whole; for if the passage does not teach that men are depraved by nature, it does not teach that they are made holy in their regeneration.

Another passage which may be adduced in support of this doctrine, is, Job xiv. 4: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." And chap. xv. 14: "What

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is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous?" The word 'righteous' shows that Job and his friend are not speaking here merely of man's natural frailty, but of his want of moral purity. He springs from a corrupt source, and is 'born' 'unclean,' i. e. unrighteous. He is *depraved* from his birth.

Again, Mark vii. 20—23: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man." And, Gen. vi. 5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." These testimonies to the character of man were given by the same Divine Being, more than two thousand years apart. They do not, it is true, assert in so many words, that man is depraved from his birth, but this is strongly implied. They ascribe all his vile passions and crimes to a

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sinful heart; and affirm that "every imagination of the *thoughts* of his heart is only evil continually." The frightful catalogue of offences enumerated by our Saviour, is a general summary intended to cover all outward transgressions. It embraces the sins of childhood and youth, as well as those of mature years; and he declares of them all, that they spring from the same corrupt source within. This inward fountain of corruption must have an existence before such streams can flow from it. If 'all these evil things' proceed out of the '*heart*,' the heart itself must be 'desperately wicked,' antecedent to its bearing such fruits. In this view, these passages confirm the doctrine of native depravity.

Again, Ps. li. 5: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Could language express more distinctly than this does, the doctrine we are attempting to prove? The royal penitent, overwhelmed with a sense of his vileness, does not stop with a confession of his outward sins, but in the exercise of true contrition goes back to the polluted source from which they sprung, the original depravity of his heart. He be-

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moans the defilement of his nature; and bows down under the abasing consciousness, that he has been a corrupt and depraved creature from the very commencement of his being; "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Would it be believed that in order to elude the force of this explicit testimony to the native sinfulness of man, the opposers of this doctrine, both in our own and former times, have resorted to the unworthy and absurd subterfuge, that David is referring here not to his own but his *mother's* sins? As though a man overwhelmed as he was with his own crimes, would be disposed to bring a mother's sins into a solemn confession of his own! And as though filial reverence would not have prevented it, had he been tempted to do it! Besides, there is not the slightest evidence, that David's mother was remarkable for her transgressions; nor that he was born out of 'lawful and honourable wedlock.' The interpretation just named is a calumny, both upon the mother and the son; while it treats the sacred text with a violence which would make the Bible mean any thing or nothing,

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according to the prejudice or fancy of the reader.

Another proof-text occurs, Eph. ii. 3:—"And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." The word here translated "by nature," means by birth. "We who are Jews *by nature* and not sinners of the Gentiles." Men are "children of wrath" "by nature," i. e. they are under the wrath of God from their birth. Why they are so, is elsewhere stated; they belong to a condemned race—a race upon which sentence of condemnation has been passed on account of the sin of the first man, their covenant-head. The fact that they are so, implies that they inherit a depraved nature. The interpretation which makes this text, and the one previously cited, mean merely that men will become the children of wrath as soon as they are old enough to commit actual sin, is a striking example of the extreme to which men will go in perverting the simplest scriptural statements, when they have a theory to support.

Again we may refer to Rom. v. 12—21. The design of the Apostle in this passage is to compare the method by which men are

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justified through the work of Christ, with the mode by which they were brought into a state of condemnation by the sin of Adam. He is not therefore treating primarily of native depravity, but this doctrine is involved in his argument. He asserts that "death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"—that "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation"—and that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." The meaning of these declarations is, that on account of the sin of Adam, his posterity are regarded and treated as sinners; they are under condemnation; by that "one man's offence" death reigns over them. This certainly implies that men are depraved from their birth. If they are from that time under condemnation, (as we are here expressly taught,) they must be destitute of those moral qualities which God approves, and possessed of a character at variance with his holy law; that is, they must have a corrupt nature.

The Scripture testimony now cited is sufficient, it is believed, to prove the doctrine of native depravity, but it may be well to adduce a few additional arguments.

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I. INFANT BAPTISM IS A PROOF OF THIS DOCTRINE.—Would this ordinance have been instituted if this doctrine were not true? Has it any significancy if infants are not depraved? The Scriptures represent baptism as implying the moral pollution of the subject. Ananias said to Saul, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Peter says, "The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God." Baptism is a seal of the new covenant—a sacrament of the new dispensation. It is administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It recognises the Father as the author of salvation, the Son as our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier. But it is manifest that pure and innocent beings stand in no need of a Redeemer or Sanctifier. Why, then, if infants have not a depraved nature, should they be baptized? Surely the ordinance is nothing less than solemn trifling on this view. Nor does it meet the difficulty at all to say, that "they will become sinners by and by, and therefore it is proper to baptize them." For, in the

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first place, according to the theory alluded to, they may never become sinners, since they may die before moral agency commences. And in the second place, the Bible gives us no warrant to baptize innocent beings, on the ground that they *may* sin at a future time. Surely consistency requires that those who adopt these sentiments should withhold their children from baptism until they can distinguish between good and evil. (See note C.)

II. NATIVE DEPRAVITY IS PROVED BY THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION.—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." All sound commentators understand this as a universal proposition, extending to the whole race, and to every individual of the race. They regard it as tantamount to a declaration, that no descendant of Adam (by ordinary generation) can enter heaven, except he be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. If this be its meaning, then, obviously, infants need to be regenerated; and if they need to be regenerated, they are depraved; for nothing but depravity can create a necessity for regeneration.

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And farther, it deserves notice, that if infants are *susceptible* of regeneration, that is, susceptible of being made holy, this proves the possibility at least of their being sinful prior to that change. The popular philosophy of the day denies this. It contends that there cannot exist sinful dispositions or a sinful nature antecedent to moral action. Of course, as there is no greater difficulty in a metaphysical view, in the existence of sinful than holy dispositions, apart from moral action, it follows, that if an infant may not have a corrupt and sinful nature, it cannot by any process acquire a holy nature; that is, it cannot be regenerated. And since, "without holiness no man can see the Lord," infants cannot on this view be saved. This is the legitimate conclusion to which we are driven by the tenets of this pernicious philosophy. (See note D.)

III. NATIVE DEPRAVITY MAY BE PROVED BY A REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.—Our Saviour tells us that "he came to seek and to save that which was *lost*." He died to save sinners. If infants are not the subjects of a sinful nature, if they are not

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condemned and lost, they need no Saviour "Who ever perished, *being innocent?*" God will not deal unjustly with them. If they are not depraved, they will not be punished hereafter.

But supposing them to be *neither holy nor sinful*, it is not easy to see how they can be benefitted by the atonement, which was made exclusively for sinners. It must in consistency be admitted on this view, (as it sometimes has been,) that infants need no Saviour, (see note E.;) and then it follows (assuming that they are saved) that there will be two distinct classes in heaven, those who have been saved through the blood of Christ, and those who have been accepted on the ground of their own innocence. A conclusion like this deserves no refutation. Those who receive with docility the instructions of the Bible, not only believe that infants may be saved through the atonement, but they find in this fact, strong confirmation of the humiliating truth that they are depraved from the womb.

IV. NATIVE DEPRAVITY IS PROVED BY THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF INFANTS.—"The

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wages of sin is death." The Scriptures represent all suffering as resulting from the curse pronounced upon our first parents. And they represent natural death in various passages as a penal evil. Thus they say, "We are consumed by thine anger;" "We pass away in thy wrath;" "The sting of death is sin;" "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so *death* passed upon all men, for that all *have sinned.*" These passages furnish the only satisfactory solution of the sufferings of infants. It is incredible that they should be subjected to so much pain and misery under the government of a righteous God, if they did not belong to a condemned race, and were not the subjects of a depraved nature.

V. Another proof of this doctrine is furnished by THE EARLY INDICATIONS OF DEPRAVITY IN ALL CHILDREN.—What stronger argument can be demanded in support of this doctrine, than the fact that all children begin to sin as soon as they can sin? And what satisfactory explanation can be given, if we reject this doctrine, of the fretfulness, and impatience, and selfishness, and anger, which

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are so frequently exhibited even in infancy? "I sinned," says Augustine, "in my infancy; and although I do not remember what I then did, I learn it from the conduct of others at the same age. I discovered dispositions which would be blamed in me now, and which, when we grow up, we are at pains to eradicate. I sought with tears what it would have been improper to give me; I was indignant at my superiors and my parents, because they would not comply with my wishes, and attempted to avenge myself by striking them. I have seen (he adds) a child that could not speak, full of envy, and turn pale with anger at another that was nursed along with it."

This humbling confession of an eminent servant of God, will find confirmation in the experience of every parent. Some children, it is true, are more amiable than others, but with the exception of the very few, who, like Jeremiah, and John the Baptist, are sanctified from the womb, they all manifest wrong tempers at a very early period.

Reason and Scripture unite in deciding that there must be some inborn depravity to pro-

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duce these effects. This will be still more apparent when we mention,

VI. As another proof of the doctrine under consideration, THE UNIVERSAL PREVALENCE OF SIN IN THE WORLD.—The testimony of the Bible on this subject, is, that "there is none righteous, no, not one:" that "all are gone out of the way, and are become unprofitable;" that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The whole history of the race is a commentary on this representation. And the world is at this moment (as it has ever been) so full of the dreadful fruits of sin, that it is presumed no candid person will question the fidelity of the picture.

How is this fact to be accounted for? How happens it that all men have become sinners —that all begin to go astray as soon as they acquire the use of their rational faculties? To say, that it is owing to bad example, is only to explain the thing by itself. For the question returns, why is it that a bad example prevails universally? Or if it be alleged that this is not the case, that there are multitudes of parents who set a good example before their children; I ask, again, why is it that even the

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children of such parents begin to sin with the first dawn of reason, and persevere in sinning till they die, unless God is pleased to give them repentance? Surely these things would not be unless there were a predisposition to do wrong, a proneness to sin antecedent to actual sin, and producing it. No other cause but a depraved and sinful nature, as the common inheritance of the race, is adequate to account for the universal prevalence of sin.

VII. Finally, it is no small confirmation of the doctrine of this essay, THAT IT HAS IN EVERY AGE RECEIVED THE ASSENT OF THE LARGEST AND PUREST PORTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—It was held by all the Reformers. It is incorporated in the Augsburg, French, Belgic, Bohemian, Helvetic, Savoy, Moravian, Scotch, and Westminster Confessions, in the Articles of the Church of England, and the Saybrook Platform. (See note F.) And moreover, it is believed by the great mass of sincere Christians in every Protestant sect. There is a strong presumption, that a doctrine is true which is found in the Bible by plain readers, whose minds are unperverted by metaphysical subtleties, and

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who study the Scriptures, not for controversy, but profit. That this class of persons generally understand the Bible as teaching that children are born with a depraved nature, will not, it is presumed, be denied.

For all these reasons, then, and others which need not be mentioned, we maintain the doctrine of native depravity. If the doctrine is not susceptible of proof, it would be difficult to prove any thing, either from Scripture or observation. The main objection urged against it in our day, is a philosophical dogma. It is affirmed, (as already stated,) that morality can attach only to acts of choice, that there can be no such thing as holy or sinful *principles* anterior to moral action, and that therefore depravity commences only with moral agency; up to that period a *child has no more moral character than a brute.* I shall not stop to examine this theory in detail: if I have succeeded in establishing the true doctrine, its fallacy has already been shown. It may be well, however, to observe that the scriptural statement, that "sin is the transgression of the law," gives no counte-

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nance to this theory. For the word rendered 'transgression of the law,' is of much more extensive signification than that phrase, and means 'want of conformity to the law;' and this is just as applicable to dispositions or principles, as to actions. If a malicious act be sinful, a malicious disposition cannot be less so. Nay, it is what lies back of an act of the will, that gives it its character, whether good or bad, holy or sinful. A holy disposition makes the actions which flow from it holy; and a sinful disposition the reverse.

The views which have now been presented, suggest several observations of a practical character, with which I shall conclude the first part of this dissertation.

First. *The doctrine of native depravity is a doctrine of great importance.*

It is a mistake, to suppose that this is a merely speculative subject, in relation to which men may safely hold any opinions they please. No error is harmless, in questions of a moral nature; and that it cannot be a matter of indifference what sentiments are held

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on *this* subject, is evident from several considerations.

One of these is the prominence assigned to it in the Scriptures. Another arises out of the very nature of the case. Surely if any question be important to us, it is the question, what is our own native character and condition? Are we depraved or holy or without moral character altogether? Are we in favour with God or under condemnation? Again, the views which men form on this subject usually modify their views on all the distinctive truths of the gospel. The gospel cannot be understood unless we understand the evils which it was designed to meet. That evil which lies at the basis of all others, is the depraved nature with which men are born. And ecclesiastical history shows, that whenever the doctrine of native depravity has been abandoned, other leading doctrines have fallen with it. Thus it was with Socinus, and before him, with Pelagius; and thus it is with errorists in our own day. Defection from the faith has usually commenced here. And it is easy to see how. If men are not depraved, there is no absolute necessity either for an

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atonement or for regeneration. The absence of depravity implies either positive holiness or plenary ability to comply with the demands of the law. If men possess this ability, and especially if they possess it without any wrong bias, why may they not comply from the outset with all the requisitions of the law, and thus acquire a title to heaven by their own works? Why must they depend on the merits of another being for salvation? Why may they not be justified on the ground of their own righteousness? These questions are not mere rhetorical figures. The principles on which they bear, constitute, as every one knows, a portion of the Socinian creed. And toward these principles, every departure from the true doctrine of native depravity tends. Wherever this doctrine is relinquished, the necessity of regeneration is either openly denied, or the new birth dwindles down into a mere reformation of manners or a decent observance of the forms of religion; and reliance upon Christ for salvation comes to mean nothing more than this, that our crude and imperfect works are mingled with the merits of

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his infinitely precious sacrifice as the ground of our acceptance with God; that is, Christ does not save the sinner, but helps the sinner to save himself. There is but one step more to downright Socinianism.

To show that the importance of this doctrine has not been over-estimated, I will quote a few remarks from Professor Neander, of Berlin, the most learned and profound ecclesiastical historian of the present age. He is speaking of the controversy on this subject between Augustine and Cælestius, the coadjutor of Pelagius in the fifth century. "Nor did Augustine (he observes) concede to Cælestius, that this controversy was so unimportant in its bearings on Christian theology. Believing that the doctrine of a Redeemer and a redemption, in which the essence of Christianity consists, presupposes the recognition of the need of redemption; he held that the doctrine of redemption is therefore closely connected with that of the depravity of human nature, and consequently with the doctrine respecting the first sin and its consequences; and that the former fundamental doctrine loses all its significance unless the

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latter doctrines are presupposed. In the contrast between Adam and Christ, therefore, consists the *very essence of Christianity*."

"If we confine ourselves (Neander proceeds) to the points which were stated by the two parties themselves, and of which they had formed distinct conceptions, it must appear that this controversy arose from the different modes of considering human nature in its present state; or rather, from the different views entertained respecting the relation of the present moral condition of mankind to the sin of Adam. In every thing else which came into discussion—the different views entertained as to man's need of assistance, as to the nature of redemption, as to the work which Christ performed, and the influence of Christianity, as to the object and efficacy of Baptism, in short, every point debated between the two parties was intimately connected with this fundamental difference. Augustine always came back at last to this, that man is in a state of corruption; and this, on the other hand, was always the point to which the disavowal of the Pelagians especially referred."*

* Biblical Repository.

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To this quotation, might be added the concurrent testimony of the ablest theologians both of Europe and America. They have with great unanimity considered the doctrine of native depravity, as a *primary and fundamental* doctrine—one that could not be abandoned without jeoparding all that is worth contending for in the gospel. (See note G.)

In the second place, we may learn from this discussion *the dreadful evil of sin.* Sin alone has reduced our race to its present deplorable condition.

If we are born depraved and corrupt, if

> "Soon as we draw our infant breath,
> The seeds of sin grow up for death,"

sin is the cause of it. What conceptions must we form of the evil of sin in God's sight, when we consider that condemnation has passed upon all men for the "one offence" of the first man; that his one sin has involved all his posterity in guilt and wretchedness, and has been the prolific source of all the pain, and sorrow, and crime, and wo, and

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death, which have filled the earth for six thousand years. Surely it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God.

Thirdly. This doctrine *ought to humble us.*

Revolting as is the picture of human nature which has been drawn, it is an unexaggerated picture of our own hearts, and incorrect only because inadequate. If it is proper for the children of an intemperate father to feel humbled on account of his misconduct, it becomes us all to abase ourselves under the consciousness that we are the degenerate offspring of an apostate head.

It should humble us also to reflect that even in our infancy we manifested symptoms of depravity, and that with the earliest exercise of our rational faculties, we began to oppose the authority and to abuse the goodness of that beneficent Being who had given us an existence and supplied us with numberless comforts.

Fourthly. This subject *exhibits in an affecting manner the responsibilities of parents.*

The depraved nature which our children possess, with all its sad concomitants of pain,

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and wo, and condemnation, they inherit from us. What parent can contemplate this fact without emotion? Who that is not dead to sensibility, can be unmoved when he reflects that he has transmitted such a legacy to his children? Who does not see that if there be any one duty which a parent owes his children, it is that of using every means within his reach, to subdue this corruption and rescue them from its thraldom?

What then is to be thought of parents who never pray for their children—who never instruct them in the Scriptures—who never converse with them about their souls—who never try to direct their minds to the Saviour, but whose whole example goes to increase their natural blindness and depravity, and to lead them farther and farther from God. Should this book fall into the hands of such a parent, suffer me to ask him, whether this is parental affection? Is this parental kindness? Is this treating your children as they ought to be treated? True, it may satisfy them now; it may be the very course which they love, and they will not *now* reproach you for it. But may not a day come

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when they will reproach you? Will they always thank you for letting them grow up in the neglect of religion? Have you no apprehension that a period may arrive, when they will say to you, "Why did you not admonish us of the consequences of sin in childhood? Why did you not endeavour to implant religious principles in our minds, at that tender age when you were doing so much to mould our characters? Why did you not, when we looked to you in confiding affection for instruction, direct us to the Saviour of sinners? Why did you not tell us of God and redemption—of the judgment, and heaven and hell? Why did you not

'Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way?'

Why did you bestow all your attention upon our frail bodies, and leave our souls to perish?"

May God preserve both the author and his readers, from the dreadful anguish of ever listening to questions like these.

Finally, What reason have we, in the light of this subject, *to bless God for a Saviour!*

God has not left our race in hopeless

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misery. The "second Adam" has been sent to repair the ruins of the fall. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

This language is full of consolation to parents who have been called to follow infant children to the grave. The Bible says very little respecting the future condition of infants; but there is strong ground to hope for their salvation. As by virtue of their connection with Adam they are condemned without any actual sin of their own, (agreeably to Rom. v. 18: "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation,") so we are authorized to conclude that they will be saved through the atonement of Christ, without the exercise of faith and repentance. Less than this can hardly be inferred, either from the general representations of the Divine character in the Scriptures, or from such expressions as these: "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;" "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And in

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relation to the children of Christian parents the case is still stronger; for they are included in that gracious covenant which God has established with his people, and "with their seed after them." To these considerations it may be added that the language of David on the death of his infant child, (2 Sam. xii. 23,) gives, on one interpretation, (not perhaps the best one,) confirmation to this opinion: "*I shall go to him*, but he shall not return to me."

Let me urge every reader of this essay, then, to seek an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. His blood can cleanse us both from original and actual sin.

> "No bleeding bird, nor bleeding beast,
> No hyssop-branch, nor sprinkling priest,
> Nor running brook, nor flood, nor sea,
> Can wash the dismal stain away."

But in Christ we may find full and complete deliverance from its power and pollution. He is made unto his people, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." They are "washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord

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Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. And these exalted privileges will be ours, if in humble dependence on his grace, we commit ourselves to him as our Lord and Redeemer.

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PART II.

IMPUTATION.

I HAVE attempted, in the former part of this dissertation, to exhibit the scripture doctrine of NATIVE DEPRAVITY. It has been proved, if I mistake not, that all men have inherited a corrupt and sinful nature—that they are born with depraved dispositions, which are the source of all actual transgressions. It is a natural and reasonable inquiry, how comes it to pass that men are brought into the world in this miserable condition? Why is it that they are born under the frown of God, and commence their existence under these strong and affecting marks of his displeasure? To these questions the Bible furnishes the only answer; "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" that is,

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condemnation has passed upon all men on account of the sin of one man. The same truth is stated in our standards, thus:—"The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity; all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression." Again, "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called *original sin*, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions." (*Larg. Cat.* Q. 22 and 25.) And, again, "They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation." *Conf. Faith*, ch. vi.)

It will be my object to prove the doctrine contained in these quotations: viz.—that THE

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POSTERITY OF ADAM ARE CONDEMNED ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SIN.

Before entering upon the discussion, I wish to make three preliminary remarks.

In the first place, as the Scriptures give us the only correct account of the creation and fall of man, so we are to receive with implicit confidence their statement of the effects produced by the fall, upon the race. We are of course to employ our rational faculties in interpreting the Bible, but we have no right to wrest the Bible from its simple and obvious meaning, in order to make it accord with our pre-conceived opinions.

In the second place, let it be remembered that the fact that the whole race have been involved in ruin by the sin of the first man, presses with equal weight upon all other theories (excepting that of the Socinians and Pelagians, who deny the fact,) as upon the doctrine of our standards. It may be denied that Adam was the federal head of his posterity, and that a covenant was made with him in which they were included, and for his violation of which they are condemned; but, the fact still remains. Children are born to

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an inheritance of sorrow. Millions of them die in infancy. And those who live, begin to sin as soon as they become moral agents. This state of things, every one must admit, has been brought about in some way by the apostasy of Adam. The rejection of the Calvinistic doctrine as to the mode in which his apostasy has produced it, neither sets aside the fact nor explains it.

In the third place, notwithstanding the hostility which many persons feel to the doctrine of our church on this subject, it *may* be the case that this doctrine is really more honourable to the Divine character (as well as more agreeable to Scripture) than any of the theories to which it is opposed. The main reason, it is confidently believed, why it is supposed to involve injustice, is that it is misconceived. Great pains have been taken, of late years, to caricature the doctrine, and hold it up to ridicule; and that by individuals who have solemnly given their assent to it. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should be so much misunderstood, and being misunderstood, that it should be denied. That there are some things about the doctrine which are mysterious, is readily conceded.

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It is a mystery that God should have permitted our first parents to fall, and by their fall, to bring an endless train of evils upon their descendants. But that He has in his infinite wisdom permitted it, no one but a Socinian or Pelagian will deny. Whether these evils are inflicted upon the race *in mere sovereignty*, or as *the penalty of a broken covenant* formed with our first parents, is a question to be determined by the word of God.

I shall first explain, and then attempt to prove, what I suppose to be the Scripture doctrine on this subject. This doctrine (as already stated in the language of our standards) is in brief as follows:

God was pleased to make a covenant with Adam, as the federal head and representative of his race, in which he promised life to him and his seed on condition of his obedience, and threatened death in case of disobedience. Adam having violated the covenant, incurred its penalty; and in virtue of his representative character, the same condemnation to which he was subjected, passed upon his posterity; they were regarded and treated as sinners on the ground of his offence. Accordingly the gracious

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influences which were withdrawn from him when he sinned, are withheld from them, so that they come into the world with a depraved nature, and subject to suffering and death. (See note H.) This is the doctrine, stripped of technical terms, and presented in familiar language. When our standards say that the posterity of Adam "sinned in him and fell with him in that first transgression;" they do not mean that all mankind constituted *one moral person* in Adam, so that his sin was actually and personally the sin of each of his descendants. Such a thing involves a metaphysical absurdity. It is contradicted also by every man's consciousness. I am not more certain of my existence than I am that I did not put forth *my* hand and pluck the forbidden fruit. Furthermore, this construction is inconsistent with the context. The answer in which this statement occurs, runs thus: "The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity; all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in that first transgression." How did they sin in him? Not literally, surely; not as being personally one with him. For

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on this view, the covenant was made directly with the whole race, and not, as here asserted, "with Adam" "*for* his posterity." The statement is as lucid as language can make it, that Adam entered into a covenant as their representative; and of course it was only on the ground of his *representative relation* to them, that they could be said to "sin in him and fall with him."

Again, as this doctrine implies no personal oneness between Adam and his race, neither does it *involve any transfer of his moral character or acts* to them. The criminality of my act can never become another man's. So the criminality of Adam's act could not pass over to his posterity. "But does not the Confession say, that the guilt of his sin is imputed to his posterity?" It does. But the word "guilt" means in its constant theological usage, not moral turpitude or criminality, *but liability to punishment*. In this sense the old writers frequently speak of the Saviour as "guilty of our sins," meaning merely that he was *liable to the penalty of the law* on account of our sins: not by any means that the pollution or the ill-desert of our sins was

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transferred to him. When the Bible says that "our sins were laid upon Christ" and that he "was made a curse for us," no one understands these and other kindred expressions as implying that the blame-worthiness of our sins was transferred to the blessed Redeemer; the obvious meaning is, that in virtue of the covenant relation which he sustains to his people, he, as their federal head and representative, bore the *punishment* which was due for their sins; he was regarded and treated as a sinner on their account. So, when our Confession says, that "the obedience and satisfaction of Christ are imputed" to the sinner as the ground of his justification, and the Bible declares that "we are made the righteousness of God in him," and that "by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous;" this language plainly means, not that the righteousness of Christ is so transferred to us as to become personally or subjectively ours, but that it becomes *legally* ours—God reckons it to our account *and regards and treats us* as though it were personally ours, that is, he regards and treats us as righteous. In the same way precisely, is the guilt of Adam's sin im-

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puted to his posterity; they become liable to punishment on account of it—they are regarded and treated as sinners on the ground of it. God is pleased to lay it to their charge and deal with them accordingly, in the same sense as he was pleased to "bruise" his beloved Son and "put him to grief," on account of our sins.

Imputation, then, in each of the cases here cited, (viz. the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, of our sins to Christ, and of his righteousness to us,) affects the *legal responsibilities*, not the moral character of the parties concerned. It creates in each case a ground of condemnation or justification, but makes no one personally either sinful or holy. It is true, the believing sinner is not only justified but regenerated, or made personally holy; and mankind are not only condemned, but depraved, that is, the subjects of corrupt and sinful dispositions, from the birth. But the personal holiness of the believing sinner forms no part of the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to him; neither is the personal depravity with which all are born, any part of the turpitude or ill-desert of Adam's sin, but they

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inherit this depravity as a consequence of the imputation of his sin.

That the doctrine under consideration has been correctly stated in the remarks just made, might be shown by ample quotations from the writings of standard divines. Two or three extracts will not be deemed inappropriate.

"Imputation (says Turretin) is either of something foreign to us, or of something properly our own. Sometimes that is imputed to us which is personally ours; in which sense, God imputes to sinners their transgressions. Sometimes that is imputed to us which is *without us*, and not performed by ourselves; thus the righteousness of Christ is said to be imputed to us, and our sins are imputed to him, although he has neither sin in himself nor we righteousness. Here we speak of the latter kind of imputation, not the former; because we are talking of a sin committed by Adam, not by us. The foundation, therefore, of imputation is not only the natural connection which exists between us and Adam, since, in that case, all his sins might be imputed to us, but mainly the moral and federal, in virtue of which, God entered into covenant

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with him as our head." Again, he observes, "We are constituted sinners in Adam, in the same way in which we are constituted righteous in Christ. But in Christ we are constituted righteous by the imputation of righteousness; therefore, we are made sinners in Adam by the imputation of his sin."

To the same effect, Dr. Owen remarks, that "things that are *not our own* originally, personally, inherently, may yet be imputed unto us 'ex justitia' by the rule of righteousness. And this may be done upon a double relation to those whose they are; 1. Federal. 2. Natural. Things done by one, may be imputed unto others, because of a *covenant relation* between them. So the sin of Adam was and is imputed unto all his posterity. And the ground hereof is, that we stood all in the same covenant with him who was our head and representative therein."* And again, "Nothing is intended by the imputation of sin unto any, but the rendering them *justly obnoxious unto the penalty* due unto that sin; as the 'not imputing' of sin, is the freeing men from being subject or liable unto punishment."*

* Treatise on Justification.

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Dr. Mason argues with his usual strength and conclusiveness, against the idea of a transfer of moral character or acts in imputation. "Instead of establishing our doctrine, (he observes, speaking of the atonement,) such a transfer would destroy it. For if my personal sin could be taken from me and made the personal sin of another, he must then suffer for himself and not for me, as I would be personally innocent. He would not be under the imputation of my sin, because I would have none to impute; and I could not enjoy the benefit of his righteousness, because on the one hand I would require none, and on the other, he, as suffering for himself, would have none to offer. So that here would be no representation, neither the substance nor the shadow of a vicarious atonement. Therefore, while my personal demerit must for ever remain my own, the consequences of it are borne by my glorious Surety. It is this which renders the imputation of sin to the Lord Jesus, a doctrine so acceptable to the conscience and so consolatory to the heart of a convinced sinner."* This train of reasoning

* Works, vol. i. p. 171.

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obviously applies in all its force to the parallel case before us.

I have dwelt the longer on this explanation of the doctrine of our standards respecting the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, for the reason already mentioned: viz. that the doctrine has been extensively misapprehended. I come now to the proof of it; that is, I am to show that Adam was the federal head of his posterity, and that in virtue of this relation, they are condemned on account of his first transgression.

First. This doctrine is strongly implied *in the inspired account of the creation and fall of man, in the first three chapters of Genesis.*

It is surprising that any one can read those chapters, keeping in view the actual condition of the race since the fall, without perceiving that Adam was acting for his posterity, as well as himself. Notice this language: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in

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the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." A child must see that these declarations were intended as much for the descendants of the first pair as for themselves.

Again, it has generally been supposed, that the 16th and 17th verses of the second chapter, contain the terms of a *covenant* between God and our first parents—which is commonly called the "covenant of works." "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Adam no sooner violated this covenant than its penalty was inflicted on him; he lost the image of God, or died spiritually, and he became subject to temporal death. The same penalty is inflicted on his posterity; which shows that they were embraced in the original transaction. The curse which was pronounced upon the ground also, that it should "bring forth thorns and thistles," continues until this day. And the sore punishment denounced against Eve, that "in sorrow she should bring

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forth children," is receiving its fulfilment in the whole history of her sex.

It being manifest then, that the sentence which was pronounced upon Adam, has been visited upon his posterity, we are driven to the conclusion that they were included with him in the original threatening. But they could have been included in this threatening only on the ground that Adam was acting as their *representative.*

The only alternative to this view, is this, to wit: that God has inflicted upon the race the countless and awful evils they suffer, (evils, let it be observed, involving, in millions of instances, eternal perdition,) in *mere sovereignty.* If this doctrine were asserted in the Scriptures, it would become us to bow to it in silent acquiescence; but it is certainly more congenial to the best feelings of the heart, to refer these evils to the source to which the Scriptures do really trace them, the broken covenant of works.

In the second place, the doctrine under consideration is proved by the *parallel drawn by the sacred writers between Adam and Christ.*

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Rom. v. 14: Adam is called "the figure [or type] of him that was to come." 1 Cor. xv. 45: "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." And verse 47: "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

These passages show that there was some strong resemblance between Adam and the Saviour. In what did this resemblance consist? Not certainly in their possessing a common nature; for in this sense any one of Adam's descendants was equally a figure or type of Christ as himself. Nor can the resemblance consist merely in this, viz.: that as Adam was the natural root of his posterity, so Christ is the root or source of life to his spiritual seed; for although this is a truth, it is not broad enough to exhaust the meaning of the text just quoted. They teach that Adam was a type of Christ, in a sense peculiar to himself, and on the ground of which Christ is called "the second man," and "the second Adam." But it is as true of any other parent who lived before the advent, as of Adam, that he was the natural root of his posterity. Nor

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again, can these passages mean simply this: that Adam conveyed a corrupt nature to his posterity, just as Christ imparts a holy nature to his spiritual children. For although this is true, it is, like the last interpretation, inadequate to the language employed by the apostle. For, (not to dwell on the observation made on the preceding explanation, and which is equally applicable to this, that in this sense Adam was no more like Christ than any other parent, since all parents convey a corrupt nature to their children,) let it be noticed that in the fifth chapter of Romans, the evils in which Adam involved his race, are affirmed to have come upon them on account of *his first sin*, not on account of his sins in general. Thus it is said, "through the *offence* of one many be dead." "By one man's *offence* death reigned by one." "As by the *offence* of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Had the apostle intended to say merely that Adam conveys a corrupt nature to his posterity, and was herein a type of Christ, it is inexplicable why he should have restricted the damage we suffer from him, to his first offence; for, considered only as our *natural* head, our depravity is to

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be ascribed, not to any one of his sins, but to the whole combined, or rather to the general defilement of his nature.

These various suppositions, then, being all unsatisfactory, there remains but one other interpretation of the passages quoted, and that is that Adam was a type of Christ *in his federal or representative character*. On this view alone, can the Saviour be spoken of as "the second man," and "the second Adam." That Christ is the federal or covenant head of his people, is a doctrine distinctly taught in the Scriptures, and the proofs of which need not be adduced in this place. If, therefore, he is the "second Adam," the first Adam must have been the covenant head of *his* children. This view is required also by the statements in the fifth of Romans, already cited, which speak of the "one offence" of Adam as the source of all our calamities. That offence involved the race in condemnation, just as the righteousness of Christ insures the salvation of all whom he represented. By that offence the covenant was broken, and he ceased from that moment to represent his posterity. Had he continued our representative after that, we

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should have experienced the penal evils incurred by his subsequent sins as we now do the penalty of the first sin. But since he forfeited his representative character by that act, it is only for that act that his constituents are regarded and treated as sinners.

In the third place, *we have the direct testimony of Scripture, that the posterity of Adam are condemned for his offence.*

If the Bible declares this, the inference is irresistible that Adam was their legal representative, or federal head, and that the guilt of his sin is imputed to them. But the Bible does teach, in passages already quoted, that our whole race have been condemned for his sin.

The object of the apostle, in Rom. v. 12—19, is to illustrate the mode in which men are delivered from sin and death, by the mode in which they were brought into that state. They are justified through Christ, as they were condemned in Adam. Throughout the argument, he assumes it as a doctrine acknowledged by those to whom the epistle was addressed, that men are condemned on the ground of Adam's transgression, and he employs this *familiar*

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and admitted fact, to illustrate the method of man's recovery by Christ. A minute and critical examination of the passage would furnish the most convincing testimony to the doctrine maintained in this essay. The time, however, will only admit of a reference to two or three of the verses.

Verse 12: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so *death* passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned.*" It is here declared that death is the punishment of sin, and that all die because all have sinned. But multitudes die who have never sinned in their own persons, viz.: infants. The sin, therefore, for which they die, must be the sin of Adam, "the one man" by whom "sin entered into the world." Verse 16: "The judgment was *by one* (*offence*) *to condemnation.*" Verse 18: "As by the offence of one *judgment came upon all men to condemnation*, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Verse 19: "For *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners*, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

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If it is within the compass of language to express the idea that all men are condemned for the offence of one man, that idea is expressed here. It is not stated merely that his sin has *in some way* involved his posterity in ruin, or that his sin has brought about their ruin as a *natural result*, just as a drunkard usually entails vice and misery upon his family; but we are told expressly, that they are judicially "*condemned*" for his offence. Furthermore we are told that we are "made sinners" by Adam's "disobedience," in the same way that we are "made righteous" by the "obedience" of Christ. But the obedience of Christ makes all whom he represented righteous, by being imputed to them; so the disobedience of Adam makes all whom *he* represented, sinners, by being imputed to them. The spiritual seed of Christ are regarded and treated as righteous on the ground of his obedience; and the seed of Adam are regarded and treated as sinners on the ground of his disobedience. There is no transfer of moral character in either case; but one class are justified and the other condemned, on the

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ground of what has been done by their respective representatives.

The interpretation here given of this important passage is obvious, and consistent; it is supported by the great body of sound critics and commentators; and it cannot be set aside without gross violence to the sacred text. (See note I.) The doctrine it teaches, is repeated Eph. ii. 3, where it is asserted that men are "by nature the children of wrath." The least that can be meant by this language is, that men are under *condemnation* from the womb—they are "by nature" under God's wrath. This can be only on the ground of the sin of some other being, who of course is our first parent.

The fact set forth in both these passages, that Adam's posterity are judicially condemned on account of his sin, shows that he was their federal head, and that, as such, the guilt of his sin is imputed to them.

Fourthly. This doctrine is proved *by the sufferings and death of infants.*

The Scriptures everywhere speak of death, not as a mere providential "consequence" of

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the fall, but as a *penal evil*—an evil judicially inflicted as the retribution of sin; in a word, as "the *wages* of sin." That temporal death is a part of this penalty, (though not the whole,) will be assumed as an admitted fact, although some have gone so far in rectifying Scripture as to deny it. (See note K.) Why then do infants suffer and die? Not, surely, "because they are actual transgressors." Nor is it enough to say, that they suffer and die "merely in consequence of a providential arrangement." This only throws the difficulty a step back;—why was such an arrangement made, and where is the equity of it, unless Adam represented his posterity? Is it credible that a just and merciful God would inflict the most tremendous evils upon successive generations of men, prior to any actual sin of their own, if they had no other connection with the pair from whom they sprung, than that which commonly subsists between parents and children? Could he not have caused the sin of our first parents to terminate upon themselves, and either made their children holy, or created another pair to be the root of the race? And are we not com-

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pelled by what we know of the Divine character, to believe that he would have done one of these things, or else cut off the succession of the race altogether, had not Adam sustained a federal relation to his posterity?

The position here taken, that temporal death is a part of the curse of the law, is not at all invalidated by the fact, that *Christians* (who are delivered from the curse of the law,) die. For, in their case, that which was a penal evil, is *converted* into a providential chastisement; it being too evident to require argument, that the same infliction may be either judicial or disciplinary, according to the *design of its Author*. So in regard to infants; if it be alleged that death is a providential chastisement to them; I reply, it can only be so on the ground that they have, (like adult believers,) been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and redeemed from the curse of the law through the blood of Christ. So that even on this view, (the correctness of which I am not disposed to question,) their death furnishes incontestable evidence that they are by nature in a state of condemnation.

If it be thought that the depraved nature

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which infants possess, is sufficient to account for their liability to suffering; I answer, First, That the apostle declares that "judgment has come upon all men to condemnation," for the offence of one man. And, Secondly, That the depravity of nature spoken of, is one of the very things to be accounted for. This depravity is the source of all our sin and misery; and the question is, how happens it that we are thus defiled from our very birth? Why are we born under this total deprivation of right principles and affections? Why do we begin to live under the visible frown of God; with a corrupt nature, which unless renewed by sovereign grace, will infallibly destroy us eternally? To say that infants die because they are depraved, although true, does not meet this difficulty at all. Nor does any human theory meet it. The fact admits of no other explanation than the one furnished by the testimony already cited, that the first man represented his race, so that when he fell, they fell, and were involved in the same condemnation with himself.

Once more, omitting other arguments, I remark briefly in confirmation of the doctrine

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of this essay, that *unless the race were tried in Adam, they have been condemned without a trial.*

This argument will be convincing to those who admit that we inherit a corrupt and sinful nature. Such a nature being at variance with the divine law, implies a state of condemnation prior to actual transgression. We are condemned, therefore, unless our doctrine be correct, without a probation either in our own persons, or that of our representative. This sentiment is so incompatible with the scripture representation of the Divine character, that it should not be lightly adopted. It is certainly more honourable to the Deity to infer, from the fact of our condemnation, that Adam was appointed our representative, and put on probation as such in our stead.

There is a theory prevalent in our day, which attempts to evade the force of this reasoning, by first denying the doctrine of native depravity, and then affirming that every individual is put on trial for himself. How fair a trial this is, may be inferred from the language of these errorists themselves, who maintain that every child is placed in such circum-

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stances that he will infallibly sin, and incur the wrath of God, as soon as he becomes a moral agent. So absolute is this certainty, that of the countless millions of Adam's descendants, (our blessed Saviour alone excepted,) not one has avoided this dreadful catastrophe. Yet we are gravely told that "God gives to each individual a fair trial for himself!" Surely this is insufferable trifling with a most solemn subject.

Such are some of the considerations which go to prove the doctrine of the federal relation of Adam to his posterity, and the universal condemnation of the race on account of his sin. Various objections have been urged against this doctrine, a few of which shall be very briefly noticed.

First. "This doctrine, (it has been alleged,) *contradicts the essential principles of moral consciousness.*"

I answer, it does this only on the assumption that the doctrine involves a personal oneness between Adam and his posterity, or a transfer of his moral character to them;

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neither of which ideas (as we have seen) belongs to the doctrine.

Secondly. It is contended that "*Adam could not have represented his posterity, because they never appointed him to that office.*"

I answer, (1.) that even among men, representation does not necessarily depend on the consent of the parties represented. Guardians are every day appointed for minors without their consent, and their acts are legally binding on their wards. So, also, nations are bound by the acts of their representatives, though not one half the people have the right of suffrage. But even if the principle were not recognized in human transactions, it could not, without the grossest presumption, be denied, that the Creator has the right to bind his creatures to any arrangement he may see fit to make, without consulting them.

(2.) God has actually exercised this right in repeated instances; that is, he has established covenants with individuals which were binding upon their posterity.

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Witness the covenant with Abraham, described Gen. xvii. 1—14. Witness also the language of Moses, Deut. v. 2, 3, respecting the covenant with Israel:—"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." A large proportion of those to whom these words were addressed, were not born at the time the covenant was made at Horeb; yet it seems they were included in it. Again, Moses thus addressed Israel on another occasion: "Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." Deut. xxix. 14, 15. The context shows that the last clause refers to future generations of their children. So irreconcilable with Scripture facts is the doctrine that even God cannot appoint one individual as the representative of others, without their consent.

(3.) The objection contains an imputation upon the divine character, and therefore destroys itself: for it implies that God *might*

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have proposed terms to Adam, which his posterity, had they been present, would have felt themselves authorized to reject as inequitable.

Thirdly. This doctrine is declared to be "*irreconcilable with the justice of God.*"

I answer, (1.) the objection overlooks the fact that God *has* suffered the whole race to be involved in ruin, through the apostasy of Adam. If this be a fact, it must be compatible with the divine justice. The only question then is, whether the justice of God may be best vindicated by referring this fact to his absolute sovereignty, or by seeking a solution of it in such a covenant with Adam as has been described. The last view we have found to be agreeable to the Scriptures, and when fairly understood, it must commend itself to the humble and patient inquirer after truth, as the most rational.

(2.) If we relinquish this view, we must adopt one which militates much more against the divine justice, viz.—that our race have been condemned without a trial.

(3.) Although we are not able to enter fully into all the reasons of the Deity in ap-

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pointing Adam as our covenant head, nor to discern all the bearings of this transaction, there are some considerations which exhibit the equity of the arrangement in a clear light.

One consideration is, that a probation in Adam was more likely to lead to a happy issue for his posterity, than if they had been put on trial each for himself. For Adam was created perfectly holy, and in the full maturity of his powers; whereas they were to commence their existence in helpless infancy, and of course far less capable of resisting temptation (on the dawn of their moral agency) than he was. Besides, his situation was in all respects pre-eminently favourable to a desirable result—much more so than could have been the situation of any of his descendants. And in addition to this, he had stronger motives to watchfulness than any other individual of the race could have had; since the welfare of all his posterity was suspended on his steadfastness.

Another consideration is, that if Adam had maintained his integrity, his posterity would have inherited eternal life as the reward of his obedience. That the covenant included a

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promise of life, is implied in the threatening, and strongly intimated in several passages in the New Testament. We may ask then, with a distinguished New England divine, (Dr. Bellamy,) whether, "if Adam had kept the covenant of his God, and secured happiness to all his race, we should not for ever have blessed God for so good a constitution? Never once should we have questioned God's right and authority to make him our public head and representative, or have thought that it did not become his wisdom and goodness to trust our all in his hands. And if we should thus have approved this constitution had Adam never sinned, why might we not as justly approve it now, if we would be but disinterestedly impartial! It is the same in itself now that it would have been then; as holy, and just, and good."*

These observations, it is believed, constitute a sufficient reply to the objection, that the doctrine, to which our attention has been directed, implicates the divine justice.

Fourthly. It is urged that this doctrine "*is at variance with the divine declaration, that*

* Bellamy's Works, vol. i. p. 221.

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'*the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.*'"—Ezek. xviii. 20.

I answer that the declaration here quoted was addressed to the Jews, who complained that they were driven into exile on account of the sins of their fathers. The prophet tells them in reply, that they shall no longer have occasion to make this complaint, since God will deal with them according to their own sins. It must be manifest, that the declaration here made respecting a particular dispensation of Divine Providence, has no direct bearing on the question, whether the race at large are condemned for Adam's sin. The objection founded on this passage will be set aside, however, if it can be shown that God has in some instances actually punished individuals for the sins of others. And this is evident from the very case which has given rise to the objection. In the second verse of this chapter, God asks, "What mean you that you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge?" that is, "why are we punished for our fathers' sins?" To this God replies,

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"As I live, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold—the soul that sinneth, it shall die." The phrase "*any more*" shows conclusively that he had not only visited upon them their own sins, but those of their rebellious ancestors—a fact also recognized in the sad confession of the Church, Lam. v. 7: "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities." The declaration, therefore, on which the objection rests is so far from asserting a universal principle in the divine dispensations, that it does not even apply to his dealings with this very people at the period immediately preceding the occasion on which it was uttered. Again, there are numerous instances mentioned in Scripture, in which *families* and *infants* are expressly declared to be devoted to death for the sins of parents or others. See an instance in the prophecy just quoted, Ezek. ix. 6, and another, Deut. xxxii. 25. So also for the sin of Achan, not only himself but "his sons and daughters were stoned and burnt with fire," Josh. vii. 24, 25, although we do not read that they were confederates with him in his crime.

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In the same way the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, was visited upon "their wives and their sons and their little children," who were destroyed with them. Numb. xvi. 27, 32. The infants of the antediluvians, of the Sodomites, and the Canaanites, shared the doom of their parents. When Israel was passing through the desert, they were attacked by the Amalekites without provocation. God imputed this crime to their descendants, and several centuries afterwards said to Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3: "I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." To the same purpose, our Saviour says to the Jews, Matt. xxiii. 35: "That *upon you* may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." In fine, the Scriptures abound with illustrations of the

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principle asserted in the second commandment, in which God proclaims himself "a jealous God, *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children*, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate" him.

How futile is it, in the face of all this testimony, to bring forward the declaration that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," as evidence that God never punishes one individual for the sin of another, and as an argument to show that the doctrine of Adam's federal character is without foundation.

The less formidable objections which are sometimes urged against the doctrine of Imputation, might be disposed of with the same facility as those that have now been mentioned. But it is needless to go into a specific enumeration of them. Enough, it is believed, has been said, to show that the doctrine is taught in the Scriptures.

Few doctrines have been more ridiculed in our day than this. And so skilfully have the shafts of ridicule been levelled, so grossly has the doctrine been misrepresented, and so vi-

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vidly have the alleged injustice and absurdity of it been depicted, both from the pulpit and the press, that even Presbyterians themselves have in many instances been half ashamed to avow their belief of it. If we are to judge from the popular representations on the subject, the doctrine of a covenant of works, in which Adam represented his posterity so that in his fall they fell, and were subjected to the penalty he had incurred, belongs to the mysticisms of the dark ages, and is quite intolerable in this golden era of improvements in theology. And there are probably intelligent people to be found who have really been made to believe that it is a doctrine fit only for the nursery. It may turn out, however, that there are not only some men of sense who hold the doctrine now, but that it has been advocated by names which will shine with undecaying lustre, when those who would brand their opinions with folly, shall have passed away into oblivion. In confirmation of this remark, look at the venerable body by which our standards were framed, the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Of this body, Mr. Baxter, who knew most of the

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members, says: "they were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity; and being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may more fully speak the truth which I know, even in the face of malice and envy; that as far as I am able to judge by the information of history and by any other evidences, the Christian world since the days of the apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines than this synod."* This testimony will be readily credited, when it is remembered that among this body were such men as Twisse and Arrowsmith, Calamy and Burgess, Tuckney and Goodwin,† and others of scarcely less celebrity. It would be wearisome to refer by name to the catalogue of illustrious men who have, since the Westminster Assembly, written in defence of the doctrine of Imputation. Let it suffice to quote the testimony of two men, neither of whom will be readily suspected of embracing a doctrine so palpably preposterous and unjust as this is sometimes affirmed to be. One of these is an eminent jurist, well skilled in the

* See Belfrage's History of the Shorter Catechism.

† See Neale's History of the Puritans, vol. iii.

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nature of laws and penalties, and the grounds of them; I mean the celebrated Lord Chief Justice Hale.

"God made man righteous at first, (he observes,) and gave him a righteous law; and inasmuch as man owed an infinite subjection to the Author of his being, he owed an exact obedience to this law of his Maker. Yet God was pleased to give him this law, not only as the rule of his obedience, but as a *covenant* of life and death, wherein the first man made a stipulation for himself and his posterity. And this was just; for he had in himself the race of all mankind. All succeeding generations are but pieces of Adam, who had, nor could have their being but from him, and so it was but *reasonable and just* for him to *contract for all his posterity.* And as it was just in respect of the person contracting, so it was in respect of the manner of the contract. The law which was his covenant, was a just and righteous law; a law suitable to the endowments and power of his nature. Again, the blessedness which by his obedience he was to hold, was not of his own creating or obtaining; it was the free gift of God; and it

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is but reasonable that the Lord of this gift might give it in what manner he pleased; and it could not be unjust, that the Lord who gave him this blessedness, should give it him under what conditions he pleased. But he gave it him under most reasonable and just conditions, viz. an obedience to a most just and reasonable law, which suited with the ability and perfection of his nature; and, therefore, when upon the breach of the covenant by man, he withdrew that blessedness from him and his posterity, he did no more than what was most just for him to do. And thus *we stand guilty of that sin* which our first father committed, and are deprived of that blessedness and life which our first father had; and the privation of that blessedness and immortality is death." Thus admirably does this great man clear the justice of God in constituting Adam the covenant-head of his posterity.

The other witness I propose to cite, is the late Rev. Dr. James P. Wilson, of Philadelphia.

"The first intelligent creatures (says Dr. Wilson) were purely spiritual, and each stood or fell for himself. He united in man the spiritual and corporeal natures; he formed his

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soul innocent and holy, and made ample provision for the comfort of his body; and as it would have been inconvenient to have brought all of the human family, which were to be in every generation, upon the earth at one time, and still more so, that every one *standing or falling for himself*, the earth should be the common habitation of beings perfectly holy, happy, and immortal, and also of cursed, perishing beings, he *constituted the first man a representative of his race.* 'Let us make *man*'—the race in one. To be fruitful, multiply, fill, and subdue the earth, were directed to the *race.* In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die. He did die spiritually; he lost his innocence, became the subject of guilt, shame, and fear; and all his posterity inherit the fallen nature. Being already *cursed*, when afterwards arraigned and sentenced, it was only necessary to curse his enjoyments in this world. *His posterity were included*, for they are subjected to the same afflictions and death. If they had not been included in the sentence, 'dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return,' as they were a part of his dust, not dying, it would not

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have been accomplished. *That he represented the race*, appears also from this, that the command was given to him *before his wife was formed;* and also because it does not appear that her eyes were opened to see her guilt and miserable condition, until *he* had eaten of the fruit; then the eyes of them *both* were opened."*

I shall now close this dissertation with a few practical observations.

First. The doctrine which has been discussed *is a doctrine of great importance.*

As this is a point about which there exists some diversity of opinion, I shall spend a little time upon it.

If all truth is valuable, (as will be generally conceded,) it cannot be a matter of indifference whether we have correct views on any subject which God has deemed it proper to embrace in a revelation of his will. It is not, however, on this ground simply, that the doctrine under consideration deserves to be regarded as important. It is important as

* See Dr. Wilson's edition of Ridgely's Divinity, vol. ii. p. 77. Note by the Editor.

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exhibiting the relation which the first man sustained to his posterity, and as vindicating the divine perfections in reference to the evils which have come upon the race in consequence of his apostasy. The alternative presented for our adoption is this: Has God established such a constitution of things, that because one man sinned, all his posterity, though related to him only as their natural root, should commence life in circumstances which render it absolutely certain that they will incur his curse with their very first moral act; or are we born under his displeasure in virtue of a benevolent covenant made with our first parent and broken by him, in which, by the just appointment of God, we were included? The latter of these views would seem to commend itself to every impartial mind, as presenting the divine character in a far more attractive light than the other, and as avoiding many of the difficulties with which it is embarrassed.. Indeed, on any other view than that which has been defended in this treatise, the dealings of God with our race, in subjecting them to such terrible inflictions by

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reason of their descent from a fallen head, are shrouded in impenetrable darkness.

Again, this doctrine is important as being *identified with the true doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ.* We are taught in the fifth chapter of Romans, that we are saved through Christ, in the same manner that we were lost in Adam. The doctrine that we are condemned for Adam's sin, was so familiar to the Jews, that the apostle does not stop to prove it, but assuming its truth, employs it to illustrate the method of our recovery. "As by the offence of one all were condemned, so by the righteousness of one all are justified." "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." One principle pervades both the Adamic and the Mediatorial dispensations. Adam was the covenant-head of his people, that is, of his race; and Christ is the covenant-head of his people, that is, of his spiritual seed. The disobedience of the first Adam was imputed to his seed, and they were condemned for it: the obedience of the second Adam is imputed to his seed, and they are

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justified by it. One covenant cannot be denied, and the other *consistently* retained. If the representative character of Adam is not admitted, that of Christ will not ordinarily be recognized, except in a very inadequate form.

And this leads to another observation, viz. that this doctrine is important, *as an essential part of that system of theology* which is taught in the Scriptures, and summarily comprised in our standards.

It has become fashionable to speak in disparaging terms of systems of theology, and of creeds and confessions of faith. (See note L.) That the Bible does not teach theology in a systematic form, is true; but to suppose that it does not contain a system of theology, complete and harmonious in all its parts, is to charge its Divine Author with framing his word without a plan. Besides, errorists, who have in every age declaimed so much against systems, have always had systems of their own, (see note M.,) which they have defended with great zeal, and not seldom, with much ingenuity.

Another fact closely allied with the one just named, is, that one error almost invariably

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brings others along with it; and so, also, when an important doctrine or principle is abandoned, its affiliated doctrines usually fall with it.

This may be illustrated by the doctrine before us. It is denied in our day that the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity. One ground of this denial is, that penal evil cannot, in the nature of the case, be inflicted on one person, for another's sin. The principle here laid down, applies as directly to the atonement as to our connection with Adam. And, accordingly, they who deny the imputation of Adam's sin to us, also deny the imputation of our sins to the Redeemer—that is, they deny that he bore the penalty of the law in our stead. And, what is more, they deny that his righteousness is imputed to us, as the ground of our justification. These two doctrines, it is true, are not always rejected with the first; but consistency requires that they should be, and there are unhappily many in our day too consistent to retain them.

Again, see where the principle leads, that morality can attach only to acts of choice. According to this principle, fairly carried out,

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Adam was not created a holy being, but made himself holy by the first exercise of his moral powers; neither was the human nature of the infant Saviour holy, until he became a moral agent. It follows, also, that infants have no more moral character than brutes; and that regeneration consists, not in a radical transformation of character by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, but in the act of the sinner's own mind—an act put forth, it may be, from no higher motive than "*self-love.*" All these opinions are the legitimate fruits of the principle, that there can be no moral character apart from moral action. And they are all held and propagated in our own country, at this time. It should be added, however, that they are not all chargeable on every one who maintains the principle just stated. For many who adopt that principle, believe in native depravity; although their philosophy compels them to take the ground that the depravity of infants consists in actual transgressions. And whatever may be their view of regeneration, they by no means admit that the sinner changes his own heart, under the influence of self-love.

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But without enlarging on the consequences of adopting a single false principle in theology, I repeat the observation, that the doctrine of the federal character of Adam, is essential to the system of truth comprised in our standards, and has ever been so regarded by the soundest divines. No one should be willing to see this doctrine trodden under foot, who does not wish to see the whole superstructure prostrated. That this remark is not lightly made, will be evident from the opinions of two distinguished theologians, whose names are held in profound veneration by the Church. One of these is President Edwards, who says, that "the rejection of the doctrine of original sin, *renders redemption unnecessary.*" The other is Dr. Owen, who holds this language on the subject:—"By some the imputation of the actual apostasy and transgression of Adam, the head of our natural posterity, whereby one sin became the sin of the world, is utterly denied. Hereby both the ground the apostle proceedeth on in evincing the necessity of our justification, or our being made righteous by the obedience of another, and all the arguments brought in confirmation of the doctrine

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of it, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, are evaded and overthrown. *Socinus* confesseth that place to give great countenance unto the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; and therefore he sets himself to oppose, with sundry artifices, the imputation of the sin of Adam unto his natural posterity. For he perceived well enough, that upon the admission thereof, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto his spiritual seed, would unavoidably follow, according unto the tenor of the apostle's discourse."

To these quotations may be added the testimony of the ablest *opposers* of our doctrine in the present day, who have justly said, that the doctrine of original sin cannot be consistently held, if that of *imputation* is abandoned.*

If any weight is to be allowed to these authorities, it is not surprising that the friends of the truth should betray so much solicitude, when the doctrine of original sin, (as embracing our covenant-relation to Adam,) is assailed. They see very well that the denial of

* Christian Spectator.

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this doctrine is likely to lead to a subversion of the system to which it belongs. Ecclesiastical history also lifts her warning voice, and teaches them, that error has achieved its most fatal triumphs, by first proposing to *modify the terms* usually employed by the Church in stating her doctrines, or by calling in question points which seemed to be of little practical value. These changes accomplished, and the Church either lulled to sleep, or constrained by the odium of controversy, to hold her peace, heresy has gained courage, and advanced with a boldness and rapidity which have baffled all opposition, and finally rent the body of Christ. (See note N.)

But not to pursue this topic, I remark,

Again, That the doctrine exhibited in these pages, *illustrates, in a striking manner, the divine sovereignty.*

It is true, the covenant of works was a reasonable, and even a benevolent arrangement, and one of which we have no right to complain. Still, every part of it seems to say, "Be still, and know that I am God." Why did Jehovah create our first parents at all, knowing that they would apostatize if "left to

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the freedom of their own wills." Why, having created them, did he not prevent their fall and secure to their seed a glorious inheritance of holiness and happiness? Why, having permitted them to fall, did he suffer them to involve the countless millions of their posterity in sin and sorrow, degradation and death? To these and similar questions, we can make but one reply, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." One thing we know, that while many of the reasons of this mysterious procedure are concealed from us, there are wise and sufficient reasons for it in the divine mind. And however inexplicable it may appear to our feeble understandings, God will yet overrule it all for his own glory, and the good of the universe.

This subject also presents in an interesting light, *the wisdom and benignity displayed in the work of redemption.*

It has just been intimated that the ultimate design of God in establishing a covenant with Adam, and permitting him to violate it, and thereby entail an inheritance of wo upon his children, was the promotion of the divine glory.

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We can already see in part, how it will contribute to this end.

It will be granted that the system of redemption contains the brightest of all the manifestations of the divine perfections. His immaculate holiness and strict justice are less gloriously displayed in the eternal perdition of the apostate angels, than in the cross of Christ. Heaven itself, replete as it is with the fruits of his unwasting beneficence, furnishes no exhibition of his love like that which is presented in the Saviour's sufferings. And it may be doubted whether the mercy of God, one of his most amiable and attractive attributes, is displayed to his intelligent creatures in any other form than as it is manifested in the redemption of man; for the holy angels need no mercy, and to the lost angels, it is not extended.

But if Adam had not fallen, Christ would not have died. If our race had not incurred the divine displeasure, the perfections of the Godhead could not have been manifested in their salvation.

Let it be considered, also, that the spiritual seed of Christ are, by the merit of his blood,

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in all probability, exalted to a much higher degree of glory than they would have been had Adam remained steadfast. For in the latter case they would simply have been put in possession of that eternal life which was promised him on condition of his obedience; whereas now they receive that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which is the just reward of the obedience of their more glorious surety. The human nature is by this wonderful plan allied with the divine, and exalted above all the thrones and principalities of heaven. And the honour which is thus put upon our nature in the person of our adorable representative, is communicated in an eminent degree to each one of his followers. In this sense it may be said,

> "In him the tribes of Adam boast
> More blessings than their father lost."

To these considerations it may be added, that the happiness of all other orders of holy beings has been greatly enhanced by the plan of redemption. The Scriptures represent the angels as watching with intense solicitude over the church militant, and declare that there is

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joy in heaven over every repenting sinner. Indeed, by means of this amazing work, "God is seen by all his intelligent creatures in new manifestations of beauty, glory, and loveliness. Throughout never-ending ages, virtuous minds will be enlarged with knowledge, exalted in holiness, and improved in dignity and happiness beyond all which would otherwise have been proper or possible; and their affections, obedience and praise, become more refined and more elevated in a rapid and regular progress."*

These suggestions show, that however dreadful may be the consequences of the apostasy to our race, the infinite wisdom and benignity of God will make it the occasion of promoting his glory and increasing the felicity of the intelligent universe.

This subject, again, *throws much light on the character, condition, and prospects of infants.*

No fact in the providence of God is more mysterious, on any other principles than those advanced in this discussion, than the sufferings and death of infants. But the doctrine of a

* Dr. Dwight.

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covenant of works in which we were all included, explains this fact. We here see that these evils are inflicted for the offence of our federal head; that by his transgression he forfeited the favour of God as well for his posterity as himself; so that they are born out of covenant with God, and subject to all the calamities inherent in a depraved and sinful nature.

While, however, we are taught to look upon them as lost in the first Adam, we are permitted to cherish the hope that they will be saved through the second Adam. We are encouraged by the general tenor of Scripture, to believe that since they have been condemned without any actual transgression for the sin of another, they will (dying in infancy) be saved through the atonement, without the actual exercise of faith and repentance. Those who deny that they are born in a lost state, and contend that they "have no moral character," must, in consistency, maintain that they cannot be saved through the Redeemer, and indeed that they need no Saviour.

Again, this subject *exhibits the nature and necessity of regeneration.*

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"Except a man be born again, (saith the Scripture,) he cannot see the kingdom of God." The doctrine of original sin shows us, that this is not a mere arbitrary requirement, but one which springs from the very nature of the case. It teaches us that we inherit from our first parent a depraved nature, "whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." It is too evident to admit of argument, that no one, not even an infant possessing such a nature, can, without being renewed, enter that world from which every "unclean thing," and every thing that "defileth," is excluded.

It is evident, also, that the change which is needed to prepare man for heaven, is not a mere outward reformation, nor simply the "giving a new direction to his constitutional desires." The remedy must penetrate to the depths of the disease. If the character is radically corrupt—if all the powers and affections of the soul are defiled—then, obviously, nothing short of a complete renovation of the heart, a new creation which shall restore to it the lost image of God, will answer. A change

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like this no human power or skill can effect. God challenges it as his own prerogative, and declares that it is "not by might nor by power, but by his Spirit" alone that the transformation can be wrought.

This change we *must* experience or we cannot be saved. No external decency of conduct, no integrity or benevolence of heart, no observance of the forms of religion or reverence for its ordinances, no pious education or zeal for orthodoxy, can take the place of it. We must be "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," "old things must pass away with us and all things become new," or we cannot be admitted hereafter to the glorious inheritance of the saints in light.

Finally, with what alacrity and joy should we *fly to the New Covenant for pardon and salvation!*

Lost as we were by the violation of the old covenant, and justly subjected to its penalty, God did not abandon us to hopeless misery, but in the plenitude of his grace provided a Saviour for us. In the covenant of grace he has made ample provision for our souls. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator of this cove-

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nant, has made a full atonement for sin, and purchased for his people, pardon, and reconciliation, and eternal life. The inestimable blessings of this covenant are offered "without money and without price," to every child of Adam: "whosoever will, may take of the water of life freely."

Let me, in closing, entreat my readers to give heed to this gracious invitation. Let me affectionately urge them to seek a participation in the privileges of that "everlasting covenant which is ordered in all things and sure." Refusing to come to Christ, you must remain "without God and without hope," under the curse of the broken covenant of works. But if in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, you commit yourselves with true penitence and humble faith into his hands, he will deliver you from that curse, cleanse you both from the sin of your nature and your actual transgressions, shed abroad in your hearts a peace which passeth knowledge, and hereafter "present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

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APPENDIX.

Note A.

It has been frequently asserted, that "the doctrine of original sin was unknown to the Church before the fifth century;" and that "it was *invented* by Augustine in his controversy with Pelagius." The best refutation of this statement is to be found in the fact that the denial of this doctrine by Pelagius, together with his other errors, excited the surprise and horror of the universal church. Fuller, the historian, tells us that, "To recount the learned works of the fathers written; their pious sermons preached; passionate [i. e. pathetic] epistles sent; private conferences entertained; public disputations held; provincial synods summoned; general councils called; wholesome canons made; to confute and condemn these opinions, under the name of Pelagius or his scholar Cælestius, would amount to a volume fitter for a porter's back to bear, than a scholar's brains to peruse." *Fuller's Church Hist.* Cent. v. p. 28.

Note B.

The reference in this paragraph is to the *New Haven System*, which has been extensively introduced within the past twelve years into the

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Presbyterian Church. That the sentiment here ascribed to that system, forms an essential part of it, is well known to every one at all familiar with the recent controversy. "Since nothing is sin (says Prof. Fitch) in any given being but *his own conduct in violation of known duty*, it is obvious that the Scriptures intend not to teach that men are, individually, the subjects of sin by the imputation of guilt, or by vitiosity of constitution, previous to moral and accountable action, or separate from it. Nothing can with truth be called his (man's) original sin, but his *first moral choice* or preference being evil."—*Two Discourses on the Nature of Sin.*

"Nor does the moral depravity of man consist in any *disposition or tendency* to sin, which is *the* cause of all sin."—*Dr. Taylor, Concio ad Clerum.*

"Neither sin nor holiness, we apprehend, can be predicated of any but moral agents." "There is no sin except such as consists in a man's own voluntary act."—*Christian Spectator*, vol. i.

"Even in this inferior, fallen, degraded, condition, sin, in the proper sense of this word, viz. a voluntary transgression of Divine law by a rational, moral, and free agent, is not a thing in its own nature *necessary*, nor strictly inevitable. It can be committed only by *an act of choice.*" *Rev. Prof. Stuart of the Andover Theological Seminary.*

"A nature cannot be holy. *The nature of Adam at his creation was not holy.* Adam was made with a nature neither sinful nor holy.

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When he began to *act*, he made it his governing purpose to serve God."—*Rev. Chas. G. Finney.*

How nearly this theory coincides with Unitarianism, may be inferred from the following exposition of the Unitarian doctrine by one of their leading ministers. "Man is by nature innocent and pure, free from all moral corruption, as well as destitute of all positive holiness." "He is by nature no more inclined or disposed to vice than to virtue, and is equally capable in the ordinary use of his faculties, and with the common assistance afforded him, of either. He derives from his ancestors a frail and mortal nature; is made with appetites which fit him for the condition of being in which God has placed him; but in order for them to answer all the purposes intended, they are so strong as to be very liable to abuse by excess. He has passions implanted in him which are of great importance in the conduct of life, but which are equally capable of impelling him into a wrong or a right course. He has natural affections, all of them originally good, but liable, by a wrong direction, to be the occasion of error or sin."—*Dr. Ware's Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists.*

Note C.

The argument from Infant Baptism, was strongly pressed upon Pelagius and his coadjutor Cælestius. "Of what advantage is it (says Augustine to the former) that you make use of the same words in the baptism of infants as adults, when you take away the thing signified in this sacrament?" Milner says, that when

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this custom was urged upon Cælestius, "as a proof of the belief of the Church in all ages, that infants needed redemption, he declared that they had no need of remission, and yet ought to be baptized, that they might be sanctified in Christ."—*Ch. Hist.* vol. ii. (Lond. ed.) p. 373.

The answer which the advocates of the New Theology in our country give to this objection, is still more remarkable. "But is there no significancy (says the Christian Spectator) in the use of the purifying element of water in this ordinance? Certainly. It indicates that the being to whom it is applied, *will* need the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, from the earliest moment that such influences can in the nature of the case take effect. But neither sin nor holiness, we apprehend, can be predicated of any but moral agents."—*Christian Spectator for* 1829, p. 374.

Is it not a mockery to administer the ordinance with these views of it?

Note D.

It is true, that the class of theologians here referred to, profess to believe that infants are saved. It is, however, maintained by them, (see quotation in note C,) not only that infants do not *need* "the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit" prior to moral agency, but that those influences *cannot* "*take effect*" upon them, before that period; that is, *God cannot regenerate an infant!* How this revolting sentiment can be reconciled with the doctrine of infant salvation, it is not easy to see.

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Note E.

The writer of this dissertation has himself heard the sentiment, that "infants need no Saviour," avowed by an individual who is now a minister, in connection with the body which has lately broken off from the Presbyterian Church.

Note F.

The Church of England, (besides the testimony in her Ninth Article already cited,) holds this strong language on this subject in one of her homilies:

"Man, of his own nature, is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds."—*Homily for Whitsunday*, Part I.

The Saybrook Platform, or Confession of Faith of the Churches of Connecticut, adopted in 1708, asserts the doctrine of the covenant of works, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and native depravity, in almost the identical language of our own standards.

Note G.

That theologians who differ widely on other subjects, concur in the opinion here expressed, that the doctrine of original sin is fundamental to the Christian scheme, may be learned from the following quotations:

"I look on the doctrine (of original sin) as of great importance; which everybody will doubt-

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less own it is, if it be true. For if the case be such indeed, that all mankind are by nature in a state of total ruin, both with respect to the moral evil of which they are the subjects, and the afflictive evil to which they are exposed, the one as the consequence and punishment of the other, then doubtless the great salvation by Christ, stands in direct relation to this ruin, as the remedy to the disease; and the whole gospel, or doctrine of salvation, must suppose it; *and all real belief, or true notion of that gospel, must be built upon it.*"—*President Edwards—Preface to his Treatise on Original Sin.*

"If, therefore, we take away this foundation, that man is by nature foolish and sinful, fallen short of the glorious image of God, *the Christian system falls at once;* nor will it deserve so honourable an appellation as that of 'a cunningly devised fable.'"—*John Wesley—Preface to his Work on Original Sin.*

"Now we confess ourselves to be of the number of those who believe, whatever reproach it may bring upon us from a certain quarter, that if the doctrine of *imputation* be given up, the whole doctrine of original sin must be abandoned. And *if this doctrine be relinquished,* then *the whole doctrine of redemption must fall,* and what may then be left of Christianity, they may contend for that will; but for ourselves we shall be of opinion that what remains will not be worth a serious struggle."—*Dr. Alexander—in the Biblical Repertory.*

The following extract is still more to our purpose. It is taken from an article entitled,

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"Prosecution of the Rev. Albert Barnes," in the leading *Unitarian* Review in this country. The strain of levity which pervades the paragraph, will not diminish its force as testimony.

"It may now occur to some of our readers to ask, What is all this windy war of words about? What are the causes of all this stir in the camp of orthodoxy? What is the precise amount of innovation which is thought to threaten the very existence of the Presbyterian Church? The causes may be stated in few words. They are the intellectual progress of the age, and an attempt on the part of the *more enlightened*, to explain the Calvinistic system, in consistency with the laws of our mental and moral nature, and the plain dictates of common sense. This can never be done. The system itself, though a castle built in the air, is most admirably framed together. The acutest minds have been for ages compacting and fitting together its parts. Now take away a single particle, and it all tumbles into ruins. If an air-built structure can be said to have a corner-stone, that corner-stone is the doctrine of original sin. *Take away this, and, though the building for a while may seem to stand fast, if you consider it more closely, you find it tottering to its fall.* This is the doctrine which is now attacked in different forms, and hence the whole hive is in motion." —*Christian Examiner, for Nov.* 1836.

"The views of Wilberforce on the subject of native depravity, you well know, were substantially the views of the great multitude of pious and learned divines of the two last centuries,

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who were lights of the world while living, and whose memory is embalmed in the hearts of the pious. They were the views of Owen, and Baxter, and Bates, and Howe, and Flavel, and Watts, and Doddridge, and Scott. They were the views of Edwards, and Bellamy, and Davies, and Dwight. It will not be easy to convince the world that these men were shallow-reasoners, or sour-minded bigots; or that the doctrine which they laid as the foundation of solid theology and vital piety, was mere fancy and delusion.

"In opposition to the views you have repeatedly expressed, I must declare my decided conviction that the doctrine in question is a doctrine of fundamental importance, and vital to the whole scheme of theoretic and practical Christianity. If, indeed, as you seem to suppose, it is an affair of mere *terminology*, then I have a right to inquire, why so much zeal for a *new* terminology? If no new doctrine is to be taught, and of course, no new light given, why should mere *words* be made the occasion of convulsing the church, and pouring contumely on its ministers? Suppose that the advocates of native depravity are even extremely tenacious of the old phraseology, believing that to part with it is to hazard the loss of scriptural truth; may they not claim the forbearance of their brethren in opposition, who, upon their own principles, can allege no adequate motive for imposing a *new* phraseology? Must a sacrifice be made, and a danger incurred, without the shadow of compensating advantage?

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"But that this is a mere verbal debate, or a debate of small importance, is confidently denied. It cannot be believed that *moral purity* and *moral impurity*, that *innocence* and *sin*, are convertible terms.

"All who read the Bible find it much occupied in delineating the character of man. Most readers have perceived in this delineation, a character of real, sinful depravity. Others assume the position that this depravity is *innocent;* and they are very confident that a doctrine of this kind will answer all the purposes of religion. But are they *sure* of this? May they not mistake? May not that which they declare to be a mere *modification* of a truth, be a real *denial* of a truth? May not the truth thus denied be a point of essential importance? May it not have aspects and bearings which they have never discovered, nor so much as suspected? Such is the infirmity of the human mind, that no man who denies, or expunges from his system, or even *modifies*, a single truth of inspiration, can be assured that he is not *corrupting the whole system of religion, doctrinal and practical.* What a tremendous responsibility does he then assume—especially if the truth in question belongs not to the superstructure of religion, but to its very foundation. Such is unquestionably the case with the doctrine we are considering. By most divines, and by most Christians, it has been thought hitherto, that the man who is essentially wrong in his views of human depravity, can be right nowhere in religion.

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"What the great Roman orator says of the liberal arts, is true of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. They are linked together by a common bond. Indeed, the mutual connection and dependence are far closer in this case, than in the former. Strike from the Christian system a single link, and soon the whole chain falls asunder, and disappears. Remove the radical depravity of the heart, and you have no place for any other truths of the gospel. And if you materially *modify* this doctrine, you soon find that the modifying process must *go through*. Regeneration becomes another thing. Repentance assumes a new aspect. The Christian conflict is dispensed with. The atonement loses half its value. And the song of *salvation by grace* becomes an empty sound."—*The Rev. Dr. Dana, of Newburyport*, in his "Letters to Professor Stuart:"—a pamphlet published since the first edition of this work was issued from the press, in which the semi-Pelagian heresy of our day is discussed with admirable ability, and in a fine tone of Christian feeling.

Note H.

"In order to account for a sinful corruption of nature, yea, a total native depravity of the heart of man, there is not the least need of supposing any evil quality infused, implanted, or wrought into the nature of man, by any positive cause or influence whatsoever, either from God or the creature; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a *fountain of evil* in his heart, such as is any thing properly positive.

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I think a little attention to the nature of things will be sufficient to satisfy any impartial considerate inquirer, that the absence of positive good principles, and so the withholding of a special divine influence to impart and maintain those good principles—leaving the common natural principles of self-love, natural appetite, &c., to themselves, without the government of superior divine principles, will certainly be followed with the corruption, yea, the total corruption of the heart, without occasion for any *positive* influence at all: and that it was thus in fact that corruption of nature came on Adam, immediately on his fall, and comes on all his posterity as sinning in him and falling with him. * * * * *

"As Adam's nature became corrupt, without God's implanting or infusing of any evil thing into it, so does the nature of his posterity. God dealing with Adam as the head of his posterity and treating them as one, he deals with his posterity as having all sinned in him. And, therefore, as God withdrew spiritual communion, and his vital gracious influence from the common head, so he withholds the same from all the members, as they come into existence; whereby they come into the world mere *flesh*, and entirely under the government of natural and inferior principles; and so become wholly corrupt, as Adam did."—*Edwards on Original Sin*, p. iv. ch. 2.

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Note I.

The following passage, written more than eighty years ago, would seem to have been designed for our times. It shows that the course of error is the same in every age.

"What further confirms the certainty of the proof of original sin, which this place [Rom. v. 12—19] affords, is this, that the utmost art cannot pervert it to another sense. *What a variety of the most artful methods have been used by the enemies of this doctrine to wrest and darken this paragraph of Holy Writ*, which stands so much in their way; as it were, to force the Bible to speak a language agreeable to their mind! How have expressions been strained, words and phrases racked! What strange figures of speech have been invented, and, with violent hands thrust into the Apostle's mouth; and then with a bold countenance, and magisterial airs, obtruded on the world, as from him! But, blessed be God, we have his words, as he delivered them, and the rest of the same epistle, and his other writings, to compare with them, by which his meaning stands in too strong and glaring a light to be hid by any of the artificial mists which they labour to throw upon it. It is really no less than *abusing* the Scripture and its readers, to represent this paragraph as the most *obscure* of all the places of Scripture that speak of the consequences of Adam's sin, and treat it as if there was need first to consider other places as more plain. Whereas, it is most manifestly a place in which these things are

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declared, the most plainly, particularly, precisely, and of set-purpose, by that great apostle, who has most fully explained to us those doctrines in general which relate to the redemption by Christ, and the sin and misery we are redeemed from. As this place in general is very full and plain, so the doctrine of the corruption of nature as derived from Adam, and also the imputation of his first sin, are both clearly taught in it. The imputation of Adam's one transgression, is indeed most directly and frequently asserted."—*Edwards on Original Sin*, part ii. ch. 4.

Those who wish to see a masterly exposition of the passage alluded to by President Edwards in the foregoing extract, are referred to Dr. Hodge's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

Note K.

Those who have not attended to the recent improvements in theology, will be surprised to learn that it is now gravely maintained that temporal death forms no part of the penalty of the law! The Christian Spectator for June, 1831, (in an article entitled "Case of the Rev. Mr. Barnes,") devotes several pages to an attempt to establish this position. The orthodox doctrine on the subject is of course fatal to their system; for if death be a penal evil, infants are evidently in a state of condemnation. Hence the necessity for setting aside the doctrine. Pelagius did not even admit that temporal death is "a consequence" of Adam's sin, but held

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that our first parents were created mortal, and would have died had they not fallen.

Note L.

Hostility to creeds, has, for obvious reasons, always gone hand in hand with heretical opinions. The utility and even necessity of creeds, might be illustrated by the history of almost every great heresy which has invaded the church. To cite a single example:—When *Arius*, who had been for some time propagating his pernicious sentiments, was at length summoned before the Council of Nice, (A. D. 325,) it was found impossible to guard against his subtilties, without some explanatory terms defining what the Scriptures had revealed. "Did the Trinitarians, (says Milner,) assert that Christ was God? the Arians allowed it, but in the same sense as holy men and angels are styled gods in Scripture. Did they affirm that he was truly God? the others allowed that he was made so by God. Did they affirm that the Son was naturally of God? it was granted; for even we, said they, are of God, of whom are all things. Was it affirmed that the Son was the power, wisdom, and image of the Father? we admit it, replied the others, for we also are said to be the image and glory of God. What could the Trinitarians do in this situation? To leave the matter undecided was to do nothing: to confine themselves merely to Scripture terms, was to suffer the Arians to explain the doctrine in their own way, and to reply nothing. Undoubtedly they had a right to comment accord-

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ing to their own judgment, as well as the Arians; and they did so in the following manner. They collected together the passages of Scripture which represent the Divinity of the Son of God, and observed, that, taken together, they amounted to a proof of his being '*of the same substance with the Father*,' ὁμοούσιος." To this formula, Arius refused to assent, and he was deposed and excommunicated.

Note M.

This is not the place to exhibit in detail the *system* of error, which has of late years spread with such alarming rapidity in this country. There is one of its leading characteristics, however, (seldom presented to the public eye,) which illustrates so forcibly the bold and reckless spirit of the system, that I cannot refrain from unfolding it to the readers of this essay. I refer to the low and unworthy views which it inculcates of the Deity. One of the main pillars of the New Haven theology, is the horrible assumption that God *has no power to prevent the introduction of sin into a moral system*—that for aught he can do to the contrary, his rational creatures may sin in any possible system which he can frame. The following quotations contain the proof of this statement.

"It is to him a subject of regret and grief, yet men transgress; they rebel in spite of his wishes; they persevere in sin in spite of all which He *can* do to reclaim them."—*Rev. E. R. Tyler.*

"It is a groundless assumption that God

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could have prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin in a moral system."—*Dr. Taylor.*

"It is in vain to talk of his omnipotence preventing sin. If infinite motives cannot prevent it, it cannot be prevented under a moral government, and to maintain the contrary is absurd and a contradiction. To administer moral laws is not the object of physical power. To maintain, therefore, that the physical omnipotence of God can prevent sin, is *to talk nonsense.*"—*Rev. C. G. Finney.*

"We affirm that the causes in kind which originate sin, being inseparably inherent in a moral universe, may so accumulate in degree under every system of Providence and government which can be pursued, as to render sure the occurrence of sin. If in a universe of such beings, no possible system of Providence pursued through eternity, can shut out all occasions of the outbreakings of sin, it is easy to see that as to His preventing it, *sin is unavoidably incident* to the acts of the Creator in creating and governing such a kingdom. . . . . If the causes of defectibility are thus inseparable from the existence of a universe of moral beings, is there not a ground of probability that they *will lead to actual defection in every possible system* as well as this?"—*Prof. Fitch.*

It may be doubted whether in the whole compass of theology any thing can be found from professedly orthodox writers, more derogatory to the divine character than the doctrine set forth in these quotations. And as to its bearing

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upon the creature, it was well remarked by the late Dr. Griffin, (in his work on Divine Efficiency,) that "this is infinitely the gloomiest idea that was ever thrown upon the world." "If God could not have prevented sin in the universe, he cannot prevent believers from fatally falling. He cannot prevent Gabriel and Paul from sinking at once into devils, and heaven from turning into a hell." "And how awfully gloomy as it respects the prospects of individual believers! You have no security that you shall stand an hour. And even if you get to heaven, you have no certainty of remaining there a day. All is doubt and sepulchral gloom."

It may readily be supposed that a doctrine like that asserted in the foregoing extracts, cannot stand alone. The views of moral agency on which it rests, must necessarily lead to a modification of almost every distinctive doctrine of the gospel. And, accordingly, the system which is built upon it, involves a virtual denial of the doctrines of election, original sin, a vicarious atonement, regeneration by the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, and justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. The terms which denote these doctrines may be retained, but they are employed in a sense unknown to the orthodox church, and subversive of the gospel. For the proof of this statement the reader is referred to the valuable work of Mr. Wood, entitled "Old and New Theology."

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Note N.

Evasion and concealment, with their kindred arts, have characterized the incipient stage of every system of error with which the Church has been corrupted. Look, for example, at the rise of Arminianism.

Arminius was a candidate for the chair of theology in the University of Leyden: but being suspected of unsoundness in the faith, he was required, as a condition of his investiture with the office, to make an explicit declaration of his sentiments on all the leading heads of doctrine. To this he readily consented, and "in the presence of the trustees of the university, he most solemnly renounced the errors of Pelagius, respecting grace, free-will, predestination, original sin, perfection in this life, &c., and declared his agreement with Augustine and the other fathers, who had written against Pelagius. He at the same time solemnly promised that he would never inculcate any doctrine different from that received by the churches: upon which he was admitted to the professorship of theology. . . . . But after he had been in office for a year or two, he began both in public and private to attack the commonly received doctrines of the Reformed Churches, with the same arguments which were used to impugn them by the Jesuits and Socinians; and he circulated among the students compositions of his own in manuscript, in which he treated contemptuously the characters of Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, and Ursinus, while he extolled the writings of certain authors

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who were suspected of being inimical to orthodoxy. And he now openly avowed that he had many animadversions to make on the commonly received doctrines; and his scholars, when they left the university, petulantly insulted the reformed churches, by disputing, contradicting, and reviling their doctrines." Yet even after this he denied that there was any real foundation for the rumours which were in circulation impeaching his orthodoxy. [Those who may wish to see the details of this matter, are referred to Dr. Thomas Scott's work on the Synod of Dort.]

Again, it is well known that *Unitarianism* was introduced into New England in the most covert manner. The Unitarian ministers of Boston and its vicinity studiously concealed their sentiments for several years. William Wells, Esq., of Boston, (a Unitarian,) in a letter to Mr. Belsham, in England, dated March 21st, 1812, says, "With regard to the progress of Unitarianism, I have little to say. Its tenets have spread very extensively in New England, but I believe that there is only one church *professedly* Unitarian." "Most of our Boston clergy, and respectable laymen, are Unitarian." "At the same time the controversy is seldom or never *introduced into the pulpit.*" In commenting on another letter from this country, Mr. Belsham attempts an apology for the concealment practised by the Unitarian clergy of Boston, in the following words: "Can it be reasonably expected of a body of clergy nursed in the lap of ease and affluence, and placed in a

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station of such high secular consideration and comfort as that of the ministers of Boston, that they should come forward, and by an open profession of unpopular truth, voluntarily risk the loss of all their temporal dignity and comfort, and incur the contempt and enmity of many who are now their warmest admirers and friends?"

The 'Spirit of the Pilgrims,' from which these extracts are taken, contains a mass of testimony to the same effect.

Historical statements like those just quoted, are full of admonition to the churches in this country. The same means which were employed for the propagation of error in the two cases specified above, have been successfully adopted in our day for diffusing the semi-Pelagianism of the New Haven school. The friends of that system claim to be sound Calvinists. They repel with warmth the imputation that they have abandoned the faith of their fathers. They allege that they differ from the brethren opposed to them, only in their 'phraseology,' and in the explanations they give of Scripture facts; that is, they "agree as to the facts, but differ in the philosophy of the facts." They profess to be, pre-eminently, the *friends of peace*, and to have an instinctive horror of controversy, as tending to retard the progress of evangelical religion. And they have actually succeeded in convincing many intelligent and excellent people, that the controversy which has recently rent the Presbyterian Church, and which is likely soon to draw another line

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of separation through the Congregational Churches of New England, is nothing more than a *debate about words*.

How much weight these considerations are entitled to, may be inferred from the fact that the system they advocate is viewed with alarm and abhorrence by the great body of the orthodox divines all over the country, and hailed with acclamations by the Unitarian clergy. The late venerable Dr. Hyde, of Massachusetts, in a letter dated April 13th, 1830, says: "I notice, with much trembling, the progress of error in this land and among the churches of New England. The New Haven scheme of theology is a broad step-stone to Arminianism. You may possibly live to have your attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ put to a severe test. The doctrines of sovereign grace are more and more discarded."

Dr. Humphrey, the President of Amherst College, says: "My opinion, expressed freely and everywhere, is, that the gentlemen at New Haven are building their system more on philosophy than on the Bible; that this philosophy is Arminian, and can never support a Calvinistic creed. My solemn belief is, that the tendency of the scheme is to bring in a flood of Arminianism, or rather, perhaps I ought to say, of Pelagianism upon our churches."

The late Rev. Dr. Fiske, president of the Wesleyan University in Connecticut, a zealous and able Arminian, in replying to a review of his Sermon on Predestination by Professor Fitch, severely rebukes the reviewer for his

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want of candour in pretending to be a Calvinist, while really subverting the Calvinistic system. "If it is *safer* (says Dr. F.) to attack Calvinism in this indirect way, I will not object. But I cannot see that it would be safer. An open, bold front, always ends best. As I understand the reviewer, from the days of John Calvin down to the present hour, there is, on this point, between the great body of Calvinists and himself, almost no likeness except in the use of words. Theirs is one doctrine, his another. Why then does he hail from that party and hoist their signals, and then, after seeming to get the victory, by espousing the very cause of the assailed, encourage the Calvinists to triumph, as if their cause had been successful?"*

The Rev. Noah Worcester, an influential *Unitarian* minister, in a work of his, published in 1833, passes high commendation on the New Haven system. After quoting a paragraph from the Christian Spectator on the subject of depravity, (presenting that doctrine in the form in which it was, previous to the late secession, propagated extensively in the Presbyterian Church,) he adds, "I rejoice that such views of human nature have been proposed and are acquiring belief. If I have not misunderstood these writers, the New Haven theology asserts that sin is a voluntary transgression of a known law, and

* It ought to be stated in justice to the Arminians, that they are so far from sanctioning the New Theology in general, that, in common with old Calvinists, they regard it as "another gospel."

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that as infants are incapable of moral agency, they are incapable of sin; and that there is no such thing as sinful nature antecedent to sinful volition, or moral action. They strongly assert that nature is not sinful. Thus far I acquiesce." And again, "Within a few years Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, with his associates, including the Christian Spectator, have done much to diminish the reputation of what has been regarded as the orthodox and Calvinistic views on the subject of original sin."—See "*Letters on the Origin and Progress of the New Haven Theology.*"

The (Unitarian) "Christian Examiner," in the article already mentioned, says, in reference to the spread of the New Theology in the Presbyterian Church: "These innovations are not so important in themselves as they are for the results to which they lead, as the prelude of an *entire revolution* in the popular theology of the day." "We conclude, therefore, as we began, by saying, that the cause of liberal Christianity has received a powerful impulse from the late doings in the Presbyterian Church, and that *the end is not yet.*"—*Christian Examiner, for Nov.* 1836.

To the above quotations, (most of which were contained in the first edition of this work,) is now subjoined part of an article from the "Christian Register," the *Unitarian* newspaper published in Boston. The article was written soon after the trial of the Presbyterian Church case in the spring of 1839, in which the New-

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school party obtained a verdict, and before that verdict was set aside.

"THE PRESBYTERIAN CASE.—This contest is of much interest, to all denominations of Christians—but most so to that portion of the Christian world, which stands foremost in opposition to all spiritual domination, and is labouring to make every man free in Christ. For the legalities of the case we care little. But we dwell on its source, its spirit, its promise, with much satisfaction—with kindling hope.

"While we contemplate the subject in this light, we feel animated and strengthened. We have not laboured in vain. *The seed we have sown has taken root, and begins to bear its proper fruit.* If we faint not, we shall soon reap a more abundant harvest. The holy principles for which we have struggled and suffered no little reproach, are shedding their quickening, resistless energies, into the bosom of every church in our country. The stagnant blood begins to flow, and the heart to swell beyond every restraint imposed on its loftier impulses—its diviner aspirations."

"What is the origin of this difficulty among the Presbyterians? It is an effort on the part of those we deem more enlightened and politic, if not more liberal, to bring Calvinism into conformity with the advanced intelligence of the times, to place it on a new and less exposed basis, to conceal by a haze of choice words, its more revolting features, and to throw a philosophical veil over its grosser deformities. It is the application of a new philosophy to the ex-

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plication of old dogmas. It is a substitution of modern garments, for its antiquated and decayed robes. There are many enlightened men in the Presbyterian Church, who see clearly that the effort to sustain Calvinism, as it has come down to them, much longer, is hopeless. Hence the attempt to modify and reconstruct it, to give it a milder, a more attractive and rational form. Will the attempt succeed? We think it will not. Calvinism admits of no modification. Moderate Calvinism sounds to us very much like a contradiction in terms. It is a nicely adjusted, balanced, and compacted structure. Remove or change the position of one stone, and the whole tumbles into ruin—not one stone will be left standing upon another. Either our nature is totally depraved or it is not. If it is not, if it has the least particle or spark, or trace, or motion of goodness about it, or within it, then it is not totally depraved, and Calvinism is false. Either there is an eternal, arbitrary election, or there is not. Either man is utterly incapable of doing any thing to effect his salvation, or he is not. There can be no modification, no mingling of elements, no mixing of sweet waters with bitter. It is a stern, unyielding, iron system. It must reign unrivalled, or unconditionally abdicate its throne. Compromise is abhorrent to its nature. The moment it starts in the least from its moorings, it is on high and giddy waves. It is driven by the winds and tossed. It is on storm-vexed seas, where it must wreck and sink, and, as we trust, never to rise."

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"These New-school theologians may, with a world of toil and vexation, rear something, on which they can sit for a while and talk of fate and free-will. But it will not do. It is on the sand, and when the floods come and beat against it, it will fall, and they will find some difficulty in making their way from the ruins. The plant they are so carefully nurturing is feeble and sickly. It has no depth of earth, and when the sun rises with a burning heat, (and it will rise,) it will wither away. Why can they not gain grace and courage enough 'to quit themselves like men?' To come out at once and embrace the truth, pure and simple, lovely and powerful, as it is in Jesus? It will make them free, joyous, and contented."

These testimonies from the friends and the foes of orthodoxy, are closed with the following extract from one of Dr. Dana's Letters to Prof. Stuart.

"Are you not alarmed, my dear sir, at the *entire revolution* which the new theory respecting original sin is introducing into the whole system of Christian doctrine, and Christian practice? Does it not wrest from the Supreme Being the sovereign control over his own world, by denying that he could have excluded sin from his system; by denying, too, that he can exercise any such influence over free moral agents as will effectually secure them from disobedience? Does it not substitute in the place of a *change of heart*, a mere *change of purpose;* a change of which *man* is the author, rather

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than God? Does it not, while verbally acknowledging the agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion, reduce that agency to a mere *suasive* influence, and deny its direct and efficient control over the heart? Does it not, by discarding the fact of *permanent dispositions*, discard the certainty of the saints' perseverance? Does it not, in the same way, discard that inward, spiritual warfare which is so much the uniform experience of Christians? Does it not subvert the doctrine of election, by resolving it into a mere certainty in the mind of God, whether the sinner will voluntarily turn, or voluntarily persist in impenitence? In a word, does it not divest the Supreme Being of his sovereignty and omnipotence in the work of human salvation, and almost transfer the same attributes to man?

I might speak of those errors of the scheme which are more immediately practical. But I am unwilling to enlarge on so painful a subject. Still, there is one point which is too important to be omitted. The theory in question lays the foundation of all moral obligation in *self-interest*. It declares that "of all voluntary action, the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the *ultimate end*." It declares that "self-love, or the *desire of happiness*, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice, which fix supremely on any object." A most comfortable doctrine this, to every sinner upon earth! For where is the sinner who does not love himself? Where is the sinner who does not desire his own happiness? But what be-

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comes of those passages of Scripture, so continually recurring, which call us off from these low propensities and aims, and which place all real virtue in SUPREME LOVE TO GOD, and REGARD TO HIS GLORY? And what follows, but that the principle in question goes directly to annihilate all moral distinctions; to reduce the good and the bad in the human family to one common level; in a word, to banish not only all piety, but all virtue from the world? It is not too much to say, that a theory embracing this principle, bears instamped on its very front, the deep, indelible brand of error and of falsehood."

THE END.

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